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The Vision Splendid * R.P.D.

British Labour and the Soviet Union * Fred Henderson

Tom Mann Centenary * Harry Pollitt

Engineering * J. R. Scott

N.A.T.O. - Fact and Fiction * Sancho Panza

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April, 1956

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IMMORTAL YOUTH

PICTURE a lively young man winning a hearing against hecklers every Sunday morning in Regent's Park. Selling Socialist literature, taking collections, resisting police interference. Writing articles and verse on Socialist topics. That was Fred Henderson, then just turned twenty, in the year 1886. Turn to page 158 and read veteran Fred Henderson's latest article, *British Labour and the Soviet Union,* especially written for LABOUR MONTHLY by him this month, seventy years later. It is an article, I believe, that every member of the Labour Party and of the whole Labour movement will find of profound interest. It is written from the standpoint of one with perhaps the longest living experience of the Socialist movement in Britain, dating back well before the foundation of the Labour Party. But don't look for reminiscences in it; it is not concerned with the past but with burning current questions now being discussed throughout the Labour Party —and with the future. Yet knowing that readers will be interested in some details of the 'prenticeship of this veteran of the Labour Party, I turned up records of the Socialist League which he joined over 70 years ago. Already in his 'teens, then in Bradford, he was corresponding with William Morris, who wrote to him on November 6, 1885: 'I am glad to hear that you are plucking up heart of grace to speak in public. When people feel as deeply as we do the corruption of society and the need for a change in its basis, we ought not to be shy of doing so.' Six months later on May 16, 1886—seventy years ago next month—we read that he made 'a thoroughly Socialistic speech', following a lecture in Bradford. In the same month his poem *A Vision of Civilisation* was published by William Morris in *Commonweal,* and two more followed in June and July. By August we find this lively young man secretary of the Socialist League's North London Branch, with headquarters in Camden Road, already gaining experience in taking open air meetings. Contemporary records give a glimpse of him at Regent's Park one Sunday morning, 'where a rather lively discussion ensued between him and a prosperous-looking capitalist who advocated thrift. . . . The audience was completely in sympathy with our view. Sales of *Commonweal* good, 2s. 9d. collected for the Defence Fund.' Thereafter, whilst maintaining that pitch, young Henderson was speaking throughout the summer—sometimes three times a day—at all the traditional speakers' pitches: Victoria Park, Mile End Waste, Hackney Marsh, Clerkenwell Green, a Marylebone street corner, by the Goods Yard in Somers Town, St. Pancras Arches, Harrow Road, Hyde Park—and once in Trafalgar Square. That 'Defence Fund'? In this period there was a big struggle in London and other cities to maintain the right of free speech against police interference. In this struggle young Henderson would hold the fort when other speakers were

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Notes of the Month

The Vision Splendid

'The ideas of communism possess a tremendous magnetic power and attract ever new supporters. . . . We are confident that the ideas of communism will triumph, and no "iron curtains" or barriers erected by the bourgeois reactionaries can halt their spread to more and more millions.'

N. S. KHRUSHCHOV, Report to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

NO Congress of any party in any country has attracted such universal world attention as the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. This is not surprising. The socialist world, reaching now to close on one thousand million human beings, is so manifestly the most constructive, dynamic and rapidly advancing part of the world today, that the proceedings of the leading party of the leading country in the vanguard of this advance inevitably win the close attention of all sections of opinion also in the diminishing sector of countries where pre-socialist institutions still survive. This consideration alone, expressed equally in the record of socialist achievement and in the breath-taking perspec-

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tive of the Sixth Five Year Plan opening out a vista of new human advance to new goals never before known or attempted in history (typified in the prospect of a society of over two hundred million human beings with universal secondary education up to the age of seventeen years), and contrasting so acutely with the sharpening economic problems of the old world, would by itself justify the universal attention to this Congress. But the significance went further.

Advancing New World

The Congress took on added significance in relation to the moment at which it met. It met in the opening phase of the new world situation which was so vividly and dramatically brought to universal attention by the moving mass reception to the Soviet leaders in India and other countries of Southern Asia. In the January Notes at the beginning of this year we wrote of 'New Worlds for Old' (and it is of passing interest as a symptom of the universal feeling of response to this new situation that these Notes have been widely reprinted in a number of other countries, including in France and in India). Everyone senses that the balance of the world is changing. The advancing strength of socialism, the end of the world dominance of imperialism, has helped to stimulate and make possible the sweep forward of liberation over vast areas of the world. Half of mankind has emerged during these years since the war from colonial subjection or dependence on imperialism to their own independent existence in sovereign states; and the process is rapidly continuing to go forward for the still remaining dependent minority.

Towards a New World Balance

This shift in the world balance has gone further. An extending number of states in Asia and Europe, outside of the socialist camp, and with India, the second most numerous nation in the world, in the forefront, have moved over to an independent political line of open opposition to the war pacts of imperialism. They have established close friendly relations and co-operation with the countries of the socialist world in the cause of peace and for aid in carrying through industrialisation and economic reorganisation without political or military strings. Thus the base of the imperialist camp has narrowed, leaving its rulers in a conspicuous minority position in the world. Even within the imperialist camp change is apparent. France has expressed public revolt against Western military policy.

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All this tremendous shift in the situation and outlook of the majority of mankind is opening new perspectives for the future of the world, and for the possibilities of peace, peaceful co-existence of differing social systems, and a peaceful transition over an extending variety of countries to the new social order.

Constructive Response

The Twentieth Congress gave the most positive, whole-hearted, dynamic and constructive response to this new world situation. This is the further factor which has given such significance to this Congress as an historical landmark of modern development, and which has helped to win it such universal attention. Undoubtedly the whole recent period of the three years since the Nineteenth Congress has seen an extending series of new and fruitful initiatives of the Soviet Union, both in the field of construction at home, and abroad to reduce international tension, remove sources of friction and promote a climate of co-operation and friendship in place of the gloomy and menacing nightmare of the cold war and the arms race. But the Twentieth Congress has opened the biggest initiative of all.

Facing the Future

No clinging to outworn formulas, methods or conceptions inappropriate to the new situation has been allowed to stand in the way. In place of passive celebration of results achieved or planned, the most unsparing review has been opened of every field of activity to remove abuses and recognise and correct faults and weaknesses. Where old conceptions, however hallowed, have become an obstacle to the fullest and most unfettered response to the giant new opportunities and needs of the present and the future, such old conceptions have been ruthlessly thrown into the discard. A life-giving stream of new creative thinking and energy, corresponding to the strength and confidence of socialist advance and of the new world situation, characterised the proceedings of the Congress. This bold and fresh and imaginative approach, the frankness of the self-criticism, and the positive and constructive response to all the most urgent problems, not only of construction and social advance within the socialist world, but of peace and human co-operation, of unity of the labour movement, and of the path of transition to socialism, has struck the imagination of the world and won the respect even of opponents. Reflecting a new world situation of limitless new possibilities opening out for the future of mankind, owing to the

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profound changes now taking place in the world, the Twentieth Congress has itself become a powerful factor in the further advance of this new world situation.

Inspiring Vision

Consider the picture and perspective opened out by the Twentieth Congress. The firm establishment and further leap forward of socialism, no longer as a new pioneering system hemmed in by a capitalist world, but as a triumphant world system of states and peoples, embracing over one-third of humanity, and advancing by every measure of progress at a rate of development unknown before in economic history and far outstripping the rate of development of the capitalist world. The confident setting of new goals to be achieved, which bring within view, not only the absolute outstripping of the most advanced capitalist countries, but the passing of the final test of outstripping the most advanced levels of capitalism in production per head. The extension of science and new technique, education and social provision on a scale never before believed possible. The sweep forward of national liberation, and the near prospect of the final ending of colonialism. The capacity of the socialist camp to aid the industrialisation of the former colonial and under-developed countries as the indispensable basis for their full and complete independence. The co-operation of states and peoples representing the majority of mankind in a great Zone of Peace against the plans for a new world war. The practical possibility for the first time for the progressive forces of humanity to banish for ever the age-old inevitability of war. The ripening of new prospects in the present world situation to begin to heal the breach in the labour movement. The new opportunities, on the basis of the strength of socialism in the world, for a united labour movement, rallying the majority of the people, in a wide series of countries to enter on the peaceful transition to socialism. The vision of the transition to communism drawing into ever closer view. In the words of the Report of N. S. Khrushchov:

> We have risen to such summits, to such a height, that we can already see before us broad vistas leading to our ultimate goal, communist society.

Self-Renewal

Never was the immortal youth of Marxism-Leninism more powerfully demonstrated than in this Congress. The creative response to every new concrete situation has always required, and continues to require, fresh approaches and the most ruthless discarding of what-

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ever has become out-dated or hinders new advance. Every such sharp turn has always raised a host of new questions until the full significance and necessity of the new approach in relation to the living situation becomes understood. It is only necessary to recall the sharpness and even startling abruptness with which Lenin again and again led the way in discerning new situations and drawing without hesitation the necessary conclusions, whatever the apparent reversal of previous positions maintained under other conditions, or the consequent necessary re-assessment of former values, as when already in the early phase of the first world war he dismissed the once revered Socialist International or 'Second International' as 'dirty linen' to be discarded, or when in 1921 he proclaimed the 'retreat' of the Nep or offered concessions to foreign capital. The inescapable necessity for such sharp turns and re-assessments did not come to an end in some magical year of imaginary finality. They continue and will continue so long as the living situation and struggle moves; if they did not, Marxism-Leninism would be a dead dogma and not a creative guide to action. But the objective test of their validity lies decisively in the question whether they correspond to the living needs of the real situation and of the movement to carry forward its advance. By that test the new contributions to Marxist-Leninist theory, and the critical re-assessment of the past period, by the Twentieth Congress are already proving themselves in practice.

Strength by Criticism

During the crucial years between the Nineteenth and Twentieth Congresses the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

> boldly uncovered shortcomings in different fields of economic, governmental and party activity, broke down outdated conceptions, resolutely sweeping aside everything that had become outmoded and was hindering our advance.

Does this mean that the preceding period was thereby dismissed as a failure with only negative features? On the contrary. The titanic achievement of the Soviet people under the leadership of their Communist Party, and therefore the imperishable historical rôle of the leadership of the Communist Party, whatever the accompanying shortcomings, throughout this period of severest testing, alike in peace and in war, was celebrated with justifiable pride, and with abundant factual demonstration, throughout the proceedings of the Congress. During this period socialist construction was not only

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completed but carried forward to new heights of economic achievement outstripping every rate of growth of the capitalist world; every onslaught from the outside world was defeated; the ordeal of war without parallel was met with honour and victory; the task of reconstruction after a devastation without parallel was successfully accomplished in record time to open the way within a few years for new sweeping advance. Such was the glorious positive record of the past quarter of a century presented by the Congress as the background to the criticism. History will never fail to honour all who contributed to this achievement.

Forward to New Goals

What was new at the Twentieth Congress in this review of the preceding period was that, precisely on the basis of this triumphant achievement and ordeals successfully met and overcome, the main focus of attention was unhesitatingly turned, not on empty self-congratulation, but on laying bare the weaknesses and negative features which had developed during this period and had to be overcome, weaknesses which were themselves in part a reflection of the severe ordeals and permanent war or threat-of-war conditions through which the people and the party had had to pass, and which found expression in violations of inner party democracy and of collective leadership, abuse of the rôle of the security organs, or in various economic, political or ideological fields. It is obvious that such criticism at such a moment is a sign, not of weakness, but of strength. If in the midst of defeat, failure, setbacks, discredit of leadership or economic deterioration, the merciless voice of criticism were to be sounded against shortcomings responsible or to expose the mistakes of honoured leaders, then such criticism could indeed be a painful necessity. But if in the hour of triumph and achievement without equal in the records of any state or society in the world unsparing criticism and self-criticism is sounded to point the way to new advance in every field, this is an expression of such an abounding self-confidence, vitality, strength and seriousness of leadership as may well give opponents pause.

Lessons for Britain

What lessons does the Twentieth Congress carry for Britain and for British Labour? It is impossible not to feel the humiliating sharpness of what was happening in Britain under the rule of the Tory monopolists at the very same moment as the Twentieth Con-

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gress was holding out its glowing prospects for the further advance of the Soviet people in every sphere of production and well-being. Between February 14 and February 25 the Congress was meeting in the Soviet Union to proclaim new targets of production, which would bring the output of coal, steel and electricity in the Soviet Union high above the combined totals of Britain, France and West Germany together, and which would raise the output of consumer goods to three times the level of 1950, treble the supplies of meat or dairy products or footwear, double the supplies of grain or textiles, double the rate of the housebuilding programme, increase the already high level of secondary, university and technical education by 50 per cent. with the complete abolition of fees, and raise real wages by 80 per cent. above the 1950 level, alongside shorter hours and the universal seven hour day (six hours for underground miners and young people). Would not any party or Government which could introduce such measures in Britain be popular? Socialism makes this possible.

Bitter Contrast

What was happening in Britain at the same time? On February 16, while the Congress was outlining those new perspectives, Mr. Macmillan was raising the Bank Rate to 5½ per cent., the highest since the dread year of 1932, with the avowed object to intensify the credit squeeze, restrict consumption and productive investment, and create the conditions for extending unemployment. On February 17 Mr. Macmillan was announcing the decision to raise the price of bread and milk by £38 million, and to cut the already restricted and pitifully inadequate construction programme of the nationalised industries (the indispensable basis for British productive advance) by £50 million, and other State capital construction expenditure by £20 million, as well as reducing still further capital expenditure by local authorities, already hamstrung by the credit squeeze, and thus bringing down still further the rate of housebuilding or the provision of the needed schools and hospitals. Widespread closing down of works or placing of works on short time has followed. Within a few days Mr. Macmillan was appealing to the trade unions to forego demands for any increase in wages even to meet the increases he was imposing on the cost of living.

Economy for What?

But Mr. Macmillan's theme of 'economy' only applied to productive expenditure or popular consumption. In unproductive

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directions he favoured increases. With the aid of his £108 million gained at the expense of Britain's productive development or the living standards of the people, Mr. Macmillan was triumphantly able to increase arms expenditure by £11 million (alongside decrease in the Soviet Union) and to raise the armed services' pay by £67 million in order to attract more regulars for the requirements of the colonial wars, empire garrison and overseas bases, and to create a new 'Flying Force' ready 'to move to any part of the world immediately' in order to suppress popular unrest. Such is the Grand Plan of capitalist economy in Britain today. Can any sane man or woman in Britain prefer this programme to the programme of socialism?

Why Not Peace?

Do these tremendous targets of socialist economy in the Soviet Union for unexampled productive increase and all-round social advance in wellbeing constitute a 'menace' to Britain or the other countries of the capitalist world? On the contrary. These targets are the surest guarantee to the most sceptical that the vast creative energies of the Soviet people and of all the peoples of the socialist world are directed first and foremost all the time to the aims of peaceful construction and increased social and cultural well-being, and that for the accomplishment of these plans they can only desire peace as the supreme aim in international relations. The second world war, arising entirely from the sick conditions of decadent capitalism, cost the socialist economy of the Soviet Union (apart from the human sacrifices) the equivalent of two five-year plans. A third world war would mean incalculable destruction. If, despite the experience of the wars of intervention and of Hitler's war, a third generation of madmen were to make the attempt, Marshal Zhukov's report made clear that the Soviet Union is equipped and able to defeat any new aggression, whatever the weapons used. But a stage has been reached, with the new balance of forces in the world situation, with the increasing recognition by the more realist leaders in the imperialist camp that the war which only a few years ago they so lightheartedly planned and proclaimed and blueprinted on the basis of an imaginary superiority to impose their will would now in fact be a reckless and disastrous gamble, and with the ranging of the majority of mankind in the camp of peace, the will of the overwhelming majority of mankind for peace can be fulfilled. Peace was the key theme of the Congress alongside the great constructive plans. Peaceful co-existence of all states, whatever the differences of political or social system, was proclaimed, not only with words,

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but with the proof of deeds, the slashing of armed forces, the abandonment of every foreign military base, the proposals for disarmament, banning nuclear weapons or banning tests as a first step, the myriad initiatives to promote friendly relations with the most diverse states and ease tension.

Peaceful Co-Existence and Socialism

But how can peaceful co-existence of capitalist and socialist states be possible, the question is still often posed, if communists persist in proclaiming their belief, as the international socialist movement has always proclaimed its belief for over a century, in the future triumph of socialism and communism all over the world? This confusion was also cleared up at the Congress. Those who pose such a question 'confuse questions of ideological struggle with questions of relations between states'. Certainly communists believe that the socialist economic system has already demonstrated and will further demonstrate its superiority over the capitalist economic system, and that, as experience teaches this lesson, more and more peoples in more and more countries will move over, in different ways, according to the conditions and forms of political development within each country, to socialism, until an era will be reached when monopoly capitalism and imperialism will be only an historical memory. But this ideological issue is no basis for wars between states. That is the essential fallacy underlying the 'cold war' theory which governed Western policy during the decade since the war and which has now reached such manifest bankruptcy.

The Great Illusion

The fatal error of Western ruling class thought and policy throughout the whole era since 1917, and culminating in the past decade of 'cold war' frenzy, has been to see the advance of socialism and national liberation over the world as a military question to be countered and defeated by superior military power. Such has been the characteristic outlook of every dying social order which has seen the emergence of a new social order only as a popular insurrection to be crushed. Therefore they have piled up their military alliances, their Atlantic Treaties and South-East Asia Treaties and Baghdad Pacts, extended their military bases all over the world, dispatched their troops for endless colonial wars, lavished their abundant resources to subsidise corrupt and unstable military allies, rearmed the old Nazi aggressors, multiplied and multiplied again their armaments and rearmament and super-rearmament, proclaimed

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their faith in more and more destructive bombs and horror weapons as their supreme salvation, and subjected their peoples to the limit of economic overstrain for these aims. And at the end of the road where have they reached?

Doom of the Dinosaur

With the Twentieth Congress they have suddenly discovered to their horror that the socialist economic system is sweeping past them in peaceful constructive development, in the utilisation of science and technique, in the provision of scientific and technical education on a scale they have found economically and socially impossible. To this new 'menace' N.A.T.O. provides no answer. All over the world the peoples begin to move out of the net of their military alliances and to turn eager eyes towards the peaceful advance of the socialist world as the inspiration for their own development. With all his stockpiles of nuclear weapons and dollars at his command, Dulles in India or Indonesia, like Templer in the Middle East, finds himself faced with the silent frigid hostility and boycott of the hundreds of millions of Asia, where Bulganin and Khrushchov were met with loving mass enthusiasm. The whole vast panoply of Western anti-communist military alliances, overseas bases, expeditionary forces and hydrogen bomb stockpiles begins to appear as about as intelligent and appropriate to the swiftly moving realities of the modern world as the tactics of the dinosaur trying to prevent the emergence of homo sapiens.

France Moves

In the light of the new world perspectives opened by the Twentieth Congress it is becoming clear to every reasonable person that the time is ripe for a review of Western policy. The publicists and commentators who have been so jubilant to discuss the self-criticism of Soviet leaders might be better advised to consider whether there is not need for some self-criticism by Western political and military leaders. Such a practice might be a salutary innovation in the hitherto unchanging Western political tradition of permanent self-righteousness. And indeed the effects of the Twentieth Congress are already beginning to make themselves felt. It is significant that within a few days of the completion of the Congress the French Government came out with the first open official criticism of the whole general line of Western policy. On March 2 the French Foreign Minister, Pineau, publicly proclaimed his 'profound dis-

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agreement' with the policy that the Western powers had pursued during recent years. The Western powers, he declared, had made a 'gigantic error' in placing military considerations first. 'Between the two conceptions of "security at any price" and peace, public opinion would go towards those who offered solutions of peace, and not towards those who spoke incessantly of a military solution.' Such an expression from France's Socialist Foreign Minister is an indication of the profound disquiet of public opinion in France with the barren 'cold-war' policy of viewing every question of international politics in terms of military strength, and of the overwhelming demand to turn to a policy for peace, as was already evident in the outcome of the general election.

Time for a Change in Britain

But what of Britain? France has spoken a first word. Has not Britain also something useful to say other than prim official disapproval of M. Pineau's 'extraordinary outburst' (*The Times*, March 3)? What will come of the Eden-Mollet meeting and the reported new approach to disarmament? Nowhere is the time more ripe and urgent for a new turn of policy than for Britain. Britain has been brought to a conspicuous impasse, economic, diplomatic and military, through the policy pursued so far by the Eden-Butler-Macmillan Government. The favourable opportunities of Geneva in the summer were thrown away by Macmillan in the autumn. The Washington Conference of Eden and Eisenhower produced no fruits save a pompous and quarrelsome Declaration devoid of practical content. The high-handed action in Cyprus has won a rare unanimity of international condemnation, including from the United States. The Templer Mission to force the hated Baghdad Pact on the Arab peoples, only stimulated the national upsurge in Jordan, dramatically expressed in the dismissal of General Glubb. The Lloyd Mission to Egypt and India met with equal failure; in India the British High Commissioner has publicly warned that 'a critical period in relations between India and Britain has been reached'. Differences between Britain and the United States increase without solution. The grand official strategy of thermonuclear war has been reduced to final lunacy by the official plan to evacuate twelve million people to nobody knows where. All this to the accompaniment of a gravely deteriorating economic situation, whose contradictions are bound up with the foreign and military policy, and which the Government's measures only accentuates.

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Britain's Opportunity

And yet never were the gates so wide open for Britain to move into a different and more favourable situation, if only a bold initiative were taken to make a turn in policy away from the bankruptcy of the 'cold war' and to embark on a positive policy for peace abroad and constructive economic advance at home. France is ready and even feeling the way, if Britain fails, to advance independently. If Britain, France and the Soviet Union, as the responsible leading powers of Europe, were to move forward together for a peaceful settlement for collective security in Europe, for a beginning of disarmament, and for an ending of strategic trade bans, this would transform the international situation, open the way to a positive and progressive rôle for British policy in international affairs, free the blocked channels of trade, and create the conditions for an expansionist, in place of restrictionist, economic policy at home. It is at any rate a first step that the Government, in spite of the hostile clamour of certain reactionary sections, has stood by its invitation, made originally as an outcome of the favourable Geneva meeting in the summer, for the visit of the Soviet leaders in April. If that visit could become the occasion, not only for the courtesies of international interchange, but also for serious and fruitful discussions to promote the aims of disarmament and collective security in Europe and the reduction of international tension, such an outcome would be enthusiastically welcomed by the British people.

Labour's Opportunity

It is evident that a major turn in Britain's policy will require a change in the ruling political forces in Britain. This is the moment where the highest opportunity is rising for British Labour since the fall of the Labour Government. The trend of by-elections has suggested that the current of opinion has begun to turn against the Tory Government. The disillusioning experiences of the worsening economic situation, and the blows of the Tory economic offensive, are likely to accentuate this trend. But an effective response to this opportunity requires two things above all. It requires a positive alternative policy which can offer release from the 'cold war' straitjacket, the endless rising arms expenditure, colonial wars and thermo-nuclear strategic lunacy, present a progressive policy for peace, reduction of armaments and trade with all countries, and offer an economic policy at home for raising living standards and entering on the path of constructive development. The second

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necessity is unity of all the forces of the working class movement, rallying the widest democratic and progressive opinion around such a common programme, in order to defeat the Tory offensive, hasten the end of the Tory Government and initiate a new era of political change in Britain which will not repeat the disasters of the 'cold war' policy of the 1945-51 Government.

Towards a New Approach

Despite all unfavourable factors, the urgent needs of the situation, and the manifest demand of the great body of the active membership of the labour movement, must and will compel the advance to a new phase in the development of the British labour movement and British politics. The supreme aim of the coming Twenty-Fourth Congress of the Communist Party at Easter will be directed to help forward this common advance, within which the Communist Party has an indispensable rôle to play. If we can learn anything from the present new international situation and perspectives, with the vast changes taking place over the world, no less than the urgent needs of the situation in Britain, it points to the necessity for a serious fresh approach by all sections here to review past and present policies with a view to seeing if we cannot find fresh paths also here in Britain to promote mutual understanding and closer co-operation for agreed common aims in order to end the dominance of reactionary policy in Britain. The first signs of new currents are not invisible. When Mr. Robens denounced the Baghdad Pact, or when Mr. Gaitskell denounced the deportation of Archbishop Makarios, the first rift in bi-partisanship has made itself felt. When the British Labour Party, French Socialists and Canadian C.C.F. found themselves in a minority at the Zurich meeting of the Socialist International in opposing the absolute rejection of dealing with communists, even though their amendment only amounted to a reasoned rejection, this also had its significance for the new questions arising. From its side the Twenty-Fourth Congress of the Communist Party will assuredly seek to make its contribution to help in the approach to the common problems before us, so that we may not only hasten the common victory over Toryism and Tory reactionary policy, but speed the day when a united labour movement can rally the majority of the people in Britain to carry through the socialist transformation of society and thereby open the way for our achievements of construction worthy of Britain and of the British working class.

March 14, 1956. R.P.D.

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BRITISH LABOUR AND THE SOVIET UNION

FRED HENDERSON

[*At the present moment when mutual understanding of the British Labour movement and the Soviet Union is of such importance for the world's future, we have great pleasure in printing this article from an honoured pioneer of the British Labour movement, Fred Henderson, who celebrated his ninetieth birthday on February 25. A member of the Socialist League, who learned the principles of Socialism from William Morris, his own book* The Case for Socialism *was outstanding in building up the early propaganda of the Labour Party some forty years ago. His analysis is the more significant because it is made from the standpoint of a member of the Labour Party who has played a creative rôle in its development and who now from his ripe experience (like the Webbs in their later years) gives his warning and his conclusions for the relations of British Labour and the Soviet Union—and for the future of world socialism.*]

IN a series of broadcast talks during the autumn of 1955, under the general title of *Then and Now*, Bertrand Russell, looking back on his eighty years of life, told his millions of listeners what was the final conclusion he had reached as to the effect upon our complex world-wide economic troubles of the profound changes which had taken place in human affairs and human outlooks during his long life. After the first world war, he told us, he found himself increasingly absorbed in social questions; and in the view of life and its possibilities to which his philosophy had—as he then thought 'finally'—led him, he still hoped to see realised 'sooner or later' the things he thought good as a young man—security from war, the abolition of poverty, and a growth of tolerance and kindly feeling.

In this stage of his development, we were told, he grew up an optimistic Liberal. The only stable improvements in human affairs, he decided, are those which alter the feelings of the individual; and it was upon this general growth of individual kindliness and tolerance that his philosophy, as an active factor in shaping human life, was based. 'It was for this reason', we were told, 'that in 1920, on a visit to Soviet Russia, he was appalled by a philosophy that seemed to him to be based upon hatred, force, and despotic power'.

We are proverbially warned against calling any man fortunate and happy until he is dead; you never can tell what reversals of

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fortune may happen while life lasts. And it is equally true that there is no finality to any man's interpretation of the philosophy of living while his mind still remains alert to the impact of new events. And Russell, who is the fortunate possessor of an active mind, a man who does not live on reminiscences of his past years, but on the projects of action in which he expects to be engaged tomorrow, was, as we shall see, to change his mind about the effectiveness, for achieving security from war and abolishing poverty, of leaving it to work itself out 'sooner or later' in the growth of individual kindliness and tolerance.

But in 1920 his indictment of Soviet Russia was a complete failure to understand the character of the Russian revolution. It was the expression of a mentality dominated for the time being by sterile abstractions which represent nothing real in the actual conduct of human life.

For a moment's consideration makes it quite manifest that, when you speak of a philosophy based on hatred and force, you get from that no indication at all of what the actual conduct of men will be under the influence of that philosophy. Russell, in his indictment of Soviet Russia, clearly implied that a philosophy so based is necessarily an evil thing at which all men of goodwill and kindly feelings must stand 'appalled'.

And that, of course, is sheer nonsense. 'Hatred' and 'force' are entirely meaningless abstractions as indications of good or evil purposes in the actual conduct of men, unless you define with precision what is the actual thing that must be hated or enforced. The most devoted crusade for goodwill and human welfare can be—and indeed must always be—inspired by hatred. Hatred of slavery, of injustice and the oppression and exploitation of men by their fellow men. As Hugh Gaitskell put it to the Labour Party Conference at Margate, 'it was hatred of social injustice that made me a Socialist 30 years ago'. And that is the effective and unanswerable reply of Soviet Russia as to the character of the revolution at whose beginnings in 1920 Bertrand Russell was so inconsequently 'appalled'.

The Labour and working-class movement everywhere, with special solidarity here in Great Britain, welcomed and saw in it a great advance in the world movement for setting the toilers of the world free from oppression; and it was this solidarity of working-class opinion about it that largely prevented the forces of a capitalist world from strangling the new order of life in Russia at its birth.

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The third point in Russell's indictment of the Russian revolution —the usage of despotic power in carrying it out—is in a different category altogether. It is not a mere meaningless abstraction, but a quite clearly defined thing which could actually happen; a precise statement of the form which human conduct might take in relation to a given event. And it is vital to any real understanding of the character of the revolution that we should see with clearness and precision what were the actual facts in the life of Russia against which the revolution was a revolt; for it was by the actual form which the oppression of men by their fellow-men had taken at that stage that the form of action necessary for achieving full liberation in Russia was governed.

In almost every country *whose working life had been industrialised and mechanised* during the two centuries before the Russian revolution, the form taken by the revolt of the workers against their exploitation had greatly changed. It had become adjusted to the fact that in the mechanised industries their actual way of living and working—the actual form of the exploitation from which they suffered—had been changed. And working-class movements, organised in trade unions and co-operative societies in the mechanised industries, were able to give much more effective expression to their fight for liberation than ever before. They made real progress in political democracy; and when the Russian revolution came in 1917 the revolt against the exploitation of men by their fellow men, in practically all such countries, had become organised for the capture of political power and the full command of national governments. And these political forces had grown in strength to a point at which their ultimate and probably quite speedy capture of governing power was a practical certainty. They had completely altered the political line-up in most fully industrialised countries, and established themselves as the alternative incoming Government party against any combination of the capitalist political forces.

But that development had not taken place in Russia on anything like the same scale. There had been considerable industrialisation of life in the greater Russian cities, and to that extent Russia too had made a real beginning of laying the foundations of political democracy. Well before the victory of the Socialist revolution in 1917, the oppressed people had begun to establish their representative institutions, not only through the limited possibilities of representation in the Duma, but above all, in 1905 and again in 1917, through the mass representative organisations, the Soviets—organisations for working class action not greatly unlike our own British

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trades councils—and so bringing into being a united working-class political force of industrial workers and peasantry; and thus establishing the power of the revolutionary Government on the rule of the exploited workers; the rule of the overwhelming majority of the people of Russia against the tiny minority of the exploiters. Nothing could be further from the actual facts than the notion, assiduously and quite falsely asserted by every capitalist spokesman the world over, that the Soviet revolution was the violent seizure and exercise of arbitrary power by a minority against the majority.

The group of Bolshevik revolutionists who, under Lenin's leadership, had the handling of the 1917 revolution, while realising to the full that this alliance of the industrial workers and the peasantry of Russia in a proletarian unity was what made victory possible in the struggle against exploitation, were also well aware of the handicap under which they had to work as compared with the united workers of the more fully industrialised nations. The economic life of Russia remained predominantly the backward peasant economy of the old Russia. In vast areas over two continents human life remained a peasant life, illiterate and with no knowledge, or means of acquiring knowledge, of life outside their own squalid villages.

Russia, in effect, was at the same stage of development as was the life of nearly all Europe before the industrial revolution began the mechanisation of the world's work; the stage at which the workers of the world, shut out from any citizenship rights through which to express their revolt against exploitation peaceably, spent their energies of revolt in incessant violent uprisings against their lords and masters; as in the constant peasant rebellions in England under the leadership of men like Jack Cade, Wat Tyler, John Ball, Kett of Norfolk and many others.

Lenin's constant insistence during the period immediately following the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 was that this backwardness of the peasantry made it necessary, in the interest of peace and unity for Russia, to adapt the working programme and methods of the revolution to it. And working on these lines, the effective outcome of it all is that the Russian revolutionists, starting three centuries later than countries like England to substitute political democracy for futile violent uprisings of the people, have made up their leeway so splendidly that within thirty years they have a worker population in many ways the best educated in the world. They have concentrated their attention and their action on the children. In schools,

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technical colleges and libraries, they have given to every Russian child full educational facilities far beyond anything the old peasant master-and-serf world dreamt of as being possible.

The capitalist world has constantly asserted that the Russian schools exist solely for communist indoctrination of the young. But the results of the Russian work of education show very clearly indeed that what they have aimed at doing has been to give Russia good engineers, good doctors, good electricians and technicians of every sort and kind. There has, of course, been communist indoctrination; just as in English and American schools there is the indoctrination of the scholars in the economics of the capitalist structure of *their* national life. But in Russia the main and essential thing aimed at, and splendidly achieved—nobody who has had any dealings with Russia can have any possible doubt about the greatness of the victory achieved over the forces of ignorance—has been to get men and women qualified by knowledge to put the fullest service to human life into the conduct of the national activities.

The truth about what Russia has been doing in the education of its people can no longer be kept from the British public. Sir Winston Churchill, speaking to his constituents at Woodford, has characteristically blown to pieces the prevalent belittlement of Russia's educational aims and achievements:

> We are already surpassed by Russia on a scale which is most alarming. In the last ten years the Soviet higher technical education for mechanical engineering has been developed both in numbers and in quality to an extent which far exceeds anything we have achieved. (December 5, 1955.)

And that Russian superiority of achievement in regard to technical education is equally true—indeed it is even more devastatingly true—as regards the general primary education of the nation's workers. In 1807, just a century and a half ago, the British House of Commons passed a Bill which would have established a public school in every parish in the land. The Bill was thrown out by the House of Lords, and the nation had to wait over half a century till the Act of 1870 brought the School Boards into existence. During that waiting period the attitude of the ruling class in England towards educating its workers was one of quite outspoken determination not to make any provision for it. 'Speaking of the poorer classes', said the Bishop of Exeter, who led the opposition to the Bill in the House of Lords, 'I see very little need for secular education. Looking to the poor as a class, we cannot expect that those who are assigned by Providence to the laborious occupations of life should be able largely to cultivate their intellects'.

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And when at last we did get our public schools in every parish, they were elementary schools only; the full cultural satisfactions of human life being still regarded as a class privilege for the few; and until well into this present century this denial of the right of the workers of the nation to full cultural education in the nation's public schools was rigidly enforced against them. I was a member of one of these School Boards in the eighteen-nineties; and I well remember how constantly, when I made suggestions for expanding the curriculum or improving the equipment of the school, I was ruled out of order on the ground that such things were beyond the strict elementary limit to which our power of spending public money was confined. The whole record of British education during that stage is one, not merely of inefficiency, but of deliberate hostility to the liberation of the workers from the ignorance which kept them disabled from any really effective revolt against their economic exploitation.

In contrast with the Russian miracle of purposeful achievement in shaping the new way of life for the Russian people, there is an almost incredibly futile capitalist refusal to face the plain facts as to what the mechanisation of the world's productive activities has done to change the whole character of human civilisation. We are today in the final stage of the great transition from the old peasant master-and-serf world to a completely new human society in which the exploitation of men by their fellow-men will have ceased; and what we are now faced with is not a multiplicity of separate national problems capable of separate national handling, but a single and unified world conflict, only capable of world settlement, between the forces seeking, under the leadership of American capitalism, to retain their old mastery over human life, and the forces seeking liberation from it.

In this world conflict the liberation forces are the forces that were set going by the Russian revolution in its great achievement of emancipating the hopeless peasantry of half the world from the ignorance which had disabled them—as it had kept the mass of British workers disabled for three centuries since the beginnings of the mechanisation of British industries—from making their revolt anything more effective than a constant succession of futile violent uprisings against the oppressions to which their lives were subject. These forces for liberation from social injustice—greatly increased by the advent of Communist China and the strong Communist developments in South-Eastern Asia and Indonesia—rapidly assumed a world-wide character when the peoples who were subject,

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as they were to a wide extent in Africa, to race and colour disabilities which made so many of them helots and outcasts in their own homeland, saw and rallied to the new hope.

They were substantially strengthened, too, by the action of the British Labour Government in releasing its subject races in Asia—India, Ceylon, Burma, and newly created nation of Pakistan—into complete *political* freedom and independence; a landmarking event in Asian history due to the personal initiative of the least showy but the most humanly inspired and understanding Prime Minister in the British record, Clem Attlee. For although, as our ineffective British record in education shows, you do *not* liberate people from social and economic injustice by giving them political freedom and leaving them still uneducated and disabled by ignorance from the effective use of their political power—nevertheless the grant of political freedom at such a time and in such a setting of world events has unmistakably given a new momentum to the forces seeking something much more than a political liberation.

The completion of the great transition from a master-and-serf social structure to the new classless world in which the exploitation of men by their fellow-men will have been finally ended has now taken definite shape, and become a matter of the most desperate urgency, in this unified world conflict between American capitalism and the Soviet peoples; and the basic affiliation of the British people in whatever action may be necessary for establishing in the life of mankind the faith and purpose the British Labour Party was created to serve, is manifestly with the Soviet peoples, and utterly against any working alliance with America in the action Washington is now taking in its effort to secure world power for making open war upon the faith and purpose for which the Soviet peoples stand.

Look carefully at what this American action is, and how it has developed into the catastrophic possibility of the complete destruction of human civilisation in a final world war of mutual annihilation.

The United Nations organisation was founded expressly to get *all* actually existing Governments, with all their rivalries and their conflicting political, social, and economic systems of living—royalist or republican, autocratic or democratic, socialist, communist, or capitalist—to get them all together round a conference table as a permanent world institution for discussing and determining their disputes by the appeal to reason instead of by war. And the more deeply the actual structure of an established Government was thought to be in conflict with the hope of a reasoned settlement, the more vitally important it was to get it into United Nations.

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Communist China was such an existing and established Government. But all the civilised nations of the world—with one single exception—saw how vitally important it was, if United Nations was to be an effective world-peacemaker, that Communist China should be in it. The single exception was the American Government at Washington; and as it was one of the great nations with a power of veto, it was able by using that veto to prevent Communist China from having a place in membership of United Nations. But it did more than that. It was able to keep in membership of United Nations the representative of the old non-Communist China, who now speaks for no existing and established Government at all.

But Soviet Russia was also one of the great Powers with a veto, and therefore able to prevent the Washington Government from getting from United Nations the armed forces America wants for its policy of throwing a cordon of heavily armed military forces round the Soviet peoples in all parts of Europe, the Middle East and Asia. And being thus thwarted from drawing on United Nations for its war policy, what America did was to create the entirely bogus North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, whose sole function it is to bye-pass and supplant United Nations as the instrument of world policy in shaping world affairs.

The practical result of all this is that the life of the world is now as completely bedevilled by military activities as it was at the height of the great world-wars. All Europe is now engaged in active military operations for encircling the Soviet peoples. England has been turned into an aircraft carrier for American bomber forces; and in all the N.A.T.O. countries millions of young men, withdrawn from the peaceful activities of life, are set to playing at being soldiers against a non-existing enemy, kept equipped with the greatest possible supplies of the most devastating weapons now known to mankind, and actively trained in handling and using them so as to inflict the maximum slaughter and devastation. Their aircraft are so thick in the air that there is hardly a day in which some of them do not crash down upon the homes of the population, smashing small townlets into heaps of wreckage, with a heavy casualty list of ordinary citizens and of children in schools and patients in hospitals. All, of course, by way of defence and manifestation of the devotion of the nations engaging in it to the sacred cause of peace and goodwill amongst men.

The British Labour Party, if it has any real understanding of the faith and purpose it was founded to serve, can have no working alliance with this lunacy into which America has thrown world

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affairs by its refusal to stand in with the whole civilised world in getting China into United Nations.

For it was that refusal which convinced the Soviet peoples of America's evil intention to make war on them instead of getting together with them in United Nations for the peaceful settlement of their differences, and induced them, with urgency, to set about equipping themselves with sufficient power to restrain America from carrying out her war policy by fear of the consequences. And the working alliance of the British people in the task to which civilisation is now committed—the task of making that restraint effective—is quite manifestly with the Soviet peoples; with whom we may have our differences, but with whom we must work if we are to restore United Nations to power for its purpose as world peacemaker against the power of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation as world war-maker. It is not at all unlikely that this unity of world action may be greatly strengthened by the force of American public opinion itself. The present Government power in America has never had any mandate from the American people for the lunatic war policy it is now pursuing: democratic opinion in the United States may yet assert itself in a world restraint upon the war policy of the America of John Foster Dulles and General MacArthur.

Let me, in conclusion, repeat that we have now reached the final stage of the great transition through which the life of mankind has been passing for four centuries; the stage at which nothing can save us from the war peril which may break out at any moment if we continue to regard what is in fact a single and unified world-struggle for the final liberation of humanity from exploitation, as being nothing but a vast multiplicity of separate tribal quarrels, incessant border wars, and all the economic rivalries of a capitalist world scrambling for markets; with every tribal and individual exploiter-unit battling for itself against the others; a world bedevilled, not only for the proverbial hindmost, but for all mankind.* And as events have now shaped, the choice to be made has become a choice between world power for the faith and purposes of the Soviet peoples and world power for American capitalism with its action-forces based on Nato; probably the most blood-stained and heavily laden with human misery of any organisation history has recorded.

In which choice, I repeat, the place of the British Labour movement, if it has any understanding of and loyalty to the faith and purpose for which it was founded, is with the Soviet peoples.

*In this bedevilment of human life, Bertrand Russell has seen very clearly the inefficiency of leaving the abolition of poverty and security from war to work itself out by the growth of individual kindliness and tolerance, and has joined in direct positive action as the only effective means of achieving these great purposes.

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TOM MANN CENTENARY

HARRY POLLITT

THE centenary of the birth of Tom Mann on April 15, 1856, recalls the life and activities of one of the greatest men the international labour movement has ever produced—a giant towering incomparably over all his contemporaries in Britain in the many years in which he played a dominant rôle in the working class movement. Tom Mann was the first British working-class leader to be known and trusted by workers throughout the world; the first to fight from start to finish for international solidarity and for the freedom of the colonial peoples. His memory lives in China as it lives in Scandinavia. He agitated and organised, worked, fought, studied and went through the school of revolutionary experience and sacrifice in every country in Western Europe, in Canada and the United States, in South Africa, and New Zealand. The Red Flag which was flown on Melbourne Trades Hall for his 80th birthday was in honour not only of the founder of the Socialist Party of Victoria, but of the man who first planted the Red Flag in Australia. The portrait of their great strike leader hangs in the place of honour in the Miners' Lodge at Broken Hill, New South Wales. Delegate at the International Trade Union Conference in London in 1888, before the Socialist International was founded, he was delegate to the third Congress of the Communist International in 1921.

The life of Tom Mann is the history of the British working class at its best. Wherever there was a fight, Tom was in it. From the great Dockers' Strike of 1889 to the last Hunger March on London, always he was in the forefront of the workers' struggle. And at the very centre of his thoughts were always those workers who were the worst paid, and suffered from unemployment most. It was this that made him, at the very outset of his long career, of service, rebel against the craft prejudices and sectionalism that characterised the trade union movement of the eighties. No worker was prouder of his craft than Tom, or of his membership of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, unbroken since he joined the Amalgamated Society of Engineers in 1881. But he knew the limited outlook was wrong: he knew the unskilled labourer had to be organised.

The New Unionism that Tom Mann championed, and those identified with it, were as fiercely attacked by the Trades Union Congress in the eighties as Communism is today. But what these

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TO

CONTEMPORARY print of unemployed London dockers outside the gates of West India Docks, 1886. Three years later came the great dock strike of 1889 which Tom Mann led to victory.

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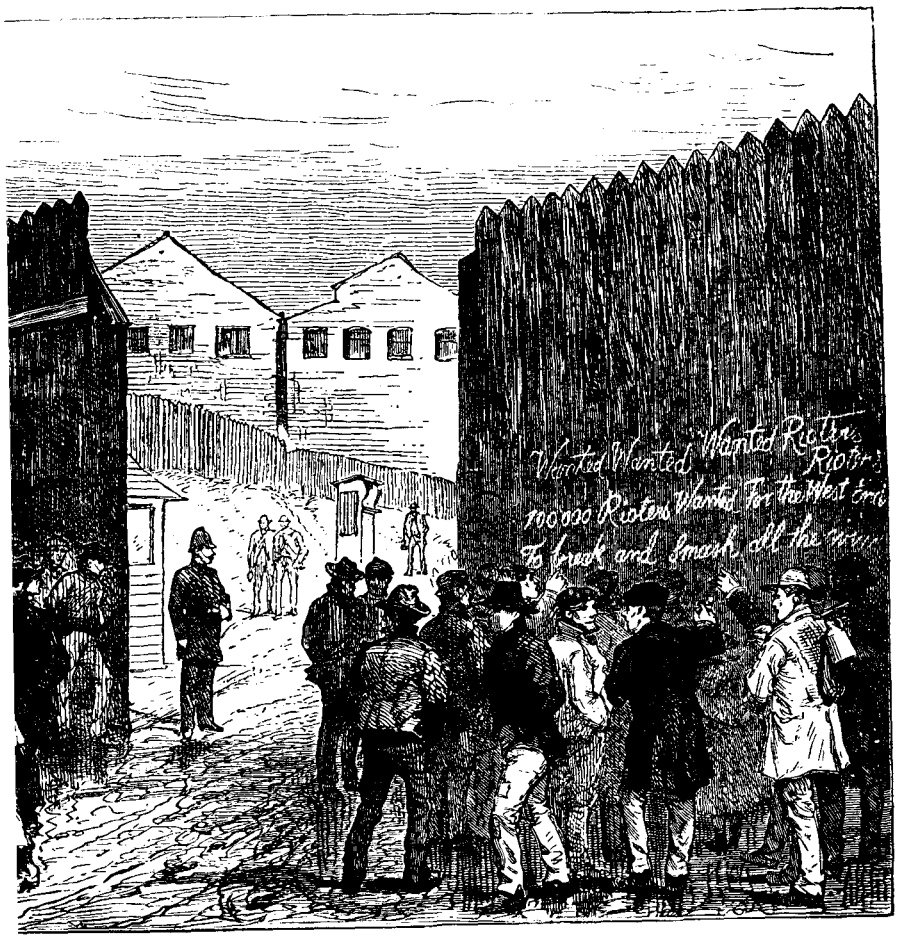
MANN · 1856-1941



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pioneers set out to achieve was achieved. There is not an industry in Britain that is not better organised today as a result of the work of Tom Mann. Miners, seamen, dockers, engineers and unskilled workers of all kinds owe a debt of gratitude to Tom Mann that is little appreciated by the present generation. But into their organisation he has put something of his genius that will not be destroyed. For from the very first of his campaigns, the agitation he began in 1886 for the eight-hour day, his aim was always not only to break down the barriers between skilled and unskilled workers, but to make trade unionism a revolutionary weapon by the inspiration of Socialism. Never satisfied with half measures, always seeing ahead, Tom Mann was the only leader of his generation who never stayed satisfied with things as they were or went after positions of security, wealth and power. He refused all those opportunities of moving 'up in the world' which have seduced so many, and lived more simply than many who owe their advance to him.

Between 1896, when, with Ben Tillett, he founded the International Federation of Transport Workers, and 1934 when he was tried along with me for sedition, he served two prison sentences in Britain and was deported from or imprisoned in France, Germany, Victoria, New South Wales, Canada and Northern Ireland. By his imprisonment two years before the First World War, for his 'Don't Shoot' appeal to soldiers called out in strikes, he opened a new chapter in anti-militarist struggle. By becoming a foundation member of the Communist Party in 1920, he carried on the habit of his life, always to march with the vanguard.

He welcomed the Russian Revolution because 'it was the direct action of the sort he wanted to see everywhere'. He not only acclaimed it, but was one of the first to be identified with the movement seeking to form a Communist Party in Britain. We are proud that this great leader of working men and women, this great international figure, this man loved by millions and hated by 'The Boss Class' (as Tom always called them), was a foundation member of the Communist Party.

Tom Mann died in 1941. But he has not gone from the memories of the millions who knew and loved him, who quickened with life as he briskly strode on the platform and to whom he explained things in such simple socialist language; those millions whom he aroused to wrath and indignation as he exposed the evils of capitalism, whom he inflamed with the determination to get together for Unity and Militancy, for Solidarity and Direct Action, and who

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waited for that moment at the end of a demonstration when Tom would command them to stand up and put up their hands if they agreed with what he had said, and swiftly taking out his handkerchief, would call for 'Three Cheers for Unity'. This was no ritual on Tom Mann's part—it was a serious thing: a pledge taken. A decision made. An audience won for action. To send workers home feeling warm with comradeship and revolutionary fire. To have robbed life of a little of its greyness and to have given a glimpse of what life under Socialism could be like.

In the last 20 years of his life he gave of his best to Communism. No journey was too tiresome to make if it was 'for the good of the cause'. His wise counsel, his urge for forms of direct action against capitalism, his example of devotion and painstaking energy made him a tower of strength to the Communist Party. He was proud that he was a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. He felt that this crowned his life's work and brought him into close contact with the revolutionary workers of the whole world. On the foundations he so well and truly laid we shall yet build the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain, and working people shall work and live, utilising the resources of modern civilisation in a way that allows human dignity and personality to flower in all their splendour for the benefit of all the common people.

FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO

COMMON STRUGGLE UNITES AND TEACHES

What, then, is the path of advance, since many sincere left workers are not yet convinced of the correctness of Communism, and at the same time wish to carry forward the struggle and not drag in the wake of reformist treachery? There is only one serious, practical answer. Since we are not yet agreed on ultimate programmes, let us find the points on which we can unite, the immediate objectives of the struggle against capitalism, on which all can unite, whatever the differences of political outlook. It is the struggle against capitalism that alone can unite the workers, that leads the way forwards, that teaches. We are faced with a situation of urgent immediate struggle, with attacks of the capitalists on every side. We need to organise the common resistance of the workers; we need to organise the workers' counter-offensive.

From *Left Socialism and Communism*, by R.P.D. April, 1931.

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ENGINEERING

J. R. SCOTT*

THE Engineering Industry has been very much in the news during recent months. This is understandable, because of the basic nature of the industry in relation to Britain's economy. Therefore any developments or tendencies which appear have concern, not only for the employers and the Government, but for the trade union movement in general, and the engineering unions in particular. Any and every declaration made by persons or unions associated with the industry takes on a greater degree of importance.

British capitalism, to a very great extent, relies upon the engineering industry for its existence, for after the raw materials have been extracted from the earth, sea and air, they are put into practical use by manufacture within the engineering industry. Prime movers in the form of electrical generating machinery, locomotion, are the starting points; machinery, new machinery and engineering production flows from those prime movers.

In this setting, therefore, the manufacture of electrical energy and particularly the development of atomic energy, have not only interest for those employed in and around the engineering industry, but for the whole of the country. It is also true that the major portion of British exports is from the engineering industry. Machinery and apparatus of a very wide and varying character flows from Great Britain to many other countries abroad, and this, in turn, forms the basis for the import of food and raw material from which to generate further production. Engineering exports amounted to 47 per cent. of all manufactured exports in 1955. The numbers employed in engineering as a percentage of all employed is 18 per cent.; a hundred years ago, when the industrial revolution was already in full swing, it was 5½ per cent., thirty-five years ago it was 12·8 per cent. Of the old staples of the export trade coal has nearly vanished and textiles are diminishing. Engineering now is the main staple. As the vice-chairman of John Browns said recently, our future is bound up with the skill we have in making capital goods. It is the base of new industries, such as chemicals and petroleum products and atomic energy. The future of transport and of agriculture is bound up with it. And so is the happiness of countless housewives who need aids to the home.

*Mr. J. R. Scott, as many of our members know, is a member of the Executive Council of the Amalgamated Engineering Union.

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This whole process has been a continuous one since the end of the war. When a situation of redundancy, or partial redundancy develops, this has its immediate effect on the import and export problem, and what is possibly more important, has its immediate effect upon the wages of the employees. Thereby it has an effect upon the standard of living not only of the families of the employees, but of an ever widening circle, involving those employed in the manufacture of component or small parts which feed into the main industry.

Redundancy has begun to appear—motor car manufacturing firms are now facing a position of short-time working. It is stated in the newspapers that thousands of motor cars are beginning to pile up in the stockyards; and the immediate future of those thousands whose livelihoods and standards of living depend upon the production of motor cars is in jeopardy. There were by the middle of March 20,000 workers laid off or put on short-time in the motor industry, apart from those affected in radio and similar trades. (There are, of course, shortages of labour in railways and in the pits: but these shortages may not last. For unemployment is a contagious disease.) The consequent reduction in earnings brings into the forefront the fact that rates of wages are low. The wage rate for engineering fitters stood at 136 per cent. above 1938 levels, before the recent increase. It was two-and-a-third above pre-war. Yet the cost of living is two-and-a-half times higher (150 per cent.). The cost of food is 166 per cent. higher; of drink and tobacco 214 per cent. higher; and of household goods and clothing 175 per cent. higher.

This is the outcome of the Tory Government's attempted solution of the economic problem, a solution which depresses the skilled man below the pre-war level. On the one hand prices have been forced up (food prices alone since 1951 have gone up by 39 per cent.—nearly two-fifths) and, when in order to keep up with this rise the workers do overtime, the earnings from this are then cut out. The effects of the interim budget of last autumn and then of the recent Macmillan measures are, inevitably, first felt by industries such as motor car manufacture, radio manufacture, and those industries allied thereto. Here, appearing in a clearer form than has ever happened since the end of the war, is one of the contradictions, if not the main contradiction, of capitalism.

The economic policy of the Tory Government which, of course, is inevitably controlled by its political policy, is that costs of pro-

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duction shall be reduced, whilst the rate of profit and the strengthening of monopoly capitalism shall be continued. The policy is pursued by the capitalists as a whole, that is by the City and the big trusts so closely allied with them, in order to solve the economic crisis. Their obvious calculation seems to be that unemployment and short time will not only cut down imports but also make those at work accept lower pay. And then the surplus value will begin to pile up.

Fundamentally, the position is, as all Marxists understand, the problem of surplus value, and it is important to recognise this fundamental issue. The surplus made per head in engineering as a whole in 1951 was £246. This is the latest year for which figures are available from the Census of Production. Higher productivity (engineering productivity per head is up by a fifth since 1948) means higher profits.* Profits for electrical and radio firms rose in the four years by 47 per cent.; for engineering by 34½ per cent.; and for motors and aircraft by 85 per cent.; in the last year they rose by 12 per cent., 13 per cent. and 15 per cent. respectively. The money 'in the kitty' rose by over a tenth for engineering and nearly a fifth for motors and aircraft.

It may be asked, why with these profits the employers are busy putting in new sorts of mechanisation, building up the organic composition of capital, as Marx pointed out nearly 90 years ago, including the methods which are coming to be known as automation. This is because in the first place, as mechanisation means fewer numbers employed—they escape the 'stranglehold' of full employment. Secondly, it means much higher surplus value for each

*The rapid increase in profits declared can be seen from the following index of profits and dividends of leading firms, published by *The Investors Chronicle* of March 3, 1956. The index (with year 1954 as 100) shows total profits, amount left for the ordinary shareholder, amount paid to him (or her) and amount left 'in the kitty' of capital and reserves. (They have this 'in the kitty' when depression comes: the workers have only unemployment insurance, with the rent to pay, an H.P. instalment due and food prices up by two-thirds since 1948.)

	Electrical and Radio	*Engineering*	*Motors and Aircraft*
No. of Companies	115	382	116
Total profits: 1954 = 100			
1951	76	84	62½
1953	94	99	78
1955	112	113	115
Equity earnings: 1954 = 100			
1951	83	95	79
1953	82	100	74
1955	128	129	134
Ordinary Dividends: 1954 = 100			
1951	65½	72½	44
1953	86	87	62
1955	123	121	119
Net Worth: 1954 = 100			
1951	63½	71	67
1953	90	92	89
1955	111	111	118

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worker employed; a mechanised industry like oil refining has a net output per head double that of all manufacturing industry. And, thirdly, such investment can only be undertaken by giant firms, with the capital resources to make them ignore 'the credit squeeze' and thus to gain a larger hold than they already have of the market. (Incidentally, this will enable them to avoid the Government's anti-Restrictive Practices Bill by eating their competitors instead of making price rings with them: and the U.S. subsidiary firms in this country are leading among the pace makers.)

All this working out of how surplus value is piled up has to be recognised. But recognition of a fact does not mean subscribing to a policy of inevitability and, like Micawber, 'waiting for something to turn up'. Workers have to get a living, and the only way they can do so is by selling their labour-power to an employer. As a consequence, it is fundamental to Marxists that we advance the struggle on two lines; first, the right to work—the right to get a livelihood out of the industry—and secondly, to raise the all-important point that the solution to these 'problems' is only finally to be found in the elimination of capitalism.

This general position raises not only the question of the fight for wages and the maintenance of working conditions, but it now raises very sharply the question of a shorter working week. It is only a few months ago that the Trades Union Congress itself (at Southport in September, 1955) had before it a resolution making a demand for a 40-hour working week. Opponents of that resolution argued that we were in the process of full employment; there was tons of work, and it was unreal to make a demand for a shorter working week. These last few months and the present situation points quite positively to the fact that capitalism cannot continuously maintain a programme of full employment unless there is a constant struggle on the part of the workers against the employers in particular, and capitalism in general.

Importance has to be paid to the recent settlement in wages, arising from negotiations between the Engineering and Allied Employers' National Federation and the Confederation of Shipbuilding Industries. A settlement has been reached (on February 29); not a satisfactory one to a considerable number no doubt; but the important point of which we have to take notice is the plea of the Engineering Employers' Federation that they have to bear in mind and take into full consideration the economic position of the country as a whole. To put it another way, they are now out in the open, so to speak, as the custodians of the policy of British

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capitalism as a whole; and because of their strength and power, giving effect to it in the industry over which they have a very big control. No regard is paid by them to the excessive profit margin within their own industry. They have been living for the last ten years or more on an ever-extending industry; and most of the firms have their order books well filled. It is true they are facing some degree of competition: but at the present day, notwithstanding this competition, they are having a very prosperous time indeed. The engineering employers, however, as publicly indicated, are looking to the future and have had placed upon them the responsibility of conducting in the industrial field the political battle of the Tory Party, and capitalism in general.

This, as a consequence, brings out to a higher degree the importance of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and its relationship to the workers in the industry, and to the workpeople in general: but, like all confederations, it is inevitably restricted by its own internal limitations, in that it is a confederation, and not an executive authority. Executive authority for its actions is determined by the decisions of the Executive Committees of all the forty affiliated unions.

When the Amalgamated Engineering Union made a public statement in January of this year, to the effect that it was inviting all unions in the engineering industry to a free discussion on the prospects of amalgamation, that announcement itself became of prime importance to all engineering workers. That meeting has been held; some twenty unions were in attendance—thirteen on the basis of a desire to discuss the possibilities of amalgamation, while seven attended with a watching brief. It is understood that a fairly free discussion took place, in which it was made perfectly clear that there is no desire for an automatic absorption of the unions within the A.E.U., but that there were varying aspects on which amalgamation could take place. At the moment that is being carefully considered by the unions. The declarations of the Tory Government, and of the Engineering and Allied Employers' National Federation should in themselves be a spur to those who seek to bring together in an ever stronger force the workpeople involved in the engineering industry. New problems are arising which call for such immediate action, which action can be more effectively carried out if single direction can be obtained.

New problems are arising in the workshop; the constant drive that has gone on in the last few years in the form of increased pro-

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ductivity, has carried with it developments of line manufacture and the transfer machine: and now the problem of automation (serious enough in itself), begins to take on new aspects and new problems. There is the big scheme for modernisation of the British Railways. Though this, so to speak, only affects 120,000 employees in the British Railway workshops, it is much more important than the matter appears to be on first glance. In general steam locomotion is to be rapidly replaced by diesel engines and electrification. Already the monopoly interests in the manufacture of diesel engines and diesel electric engines have staked their claim. What is to be the position then with regard not only to the Railway Workshops as places, but the employees who are employed in those workshops? Can there be a situation of this alleged 'mixed economy', or is the process to be one in which the monopoly interests of capitalism exercise their power and influence in this sphere of activity? How much easier, or relatively easier, would this question be if there were but one or two unions dealing with the issues as they arise and, at the same time, having a fundamental grip on the policy that is being developed!

It is no small wonder then that most of the capitalist newspapers have, in recent months, been drawing attention not only by scare-mongering articles but by relatively serious articles on developments in this most important industry. Not only are they concerned with the trends of developments: they are also worried when questions of union amalgamation come up; and, of course, they have now entered into the field as agitators, or advisers on internal union matters, such as elections to offices, and future officers of the important unions. The general problems raised here are not in themselves easy of solution, but need to be discussed fully and in detail by all people interested in the rôle, function and future destiny of the British trade union movement, and the working class in general.

CONTENTS OF PREVIOUS NUMBERS—1956

JANUARY: *New Worlds for Old* (R.P.D.); *Watch This Washington Visit* (Quæstor); *Not a Penny on the Rent* (P. Piratin); *The Trade that Butler Stops* (J. Eaton); *The Real Americans* (J. Williamson); *Western Values, I* (Sancho Panza); *Bloodless* (W. Gallacher). BOOK REVIEW: *The African Awakening* (B. Davidson); reviewed by R.P.D.

FEBRUARY: *Leadership and Policy in Britain* (R.P.D.); *Cyprus, Greece and N.A.T.O.* (T. Doganis); *Light on Israeli Policy* (S. Mikunis); *Youth Under the Microscope* (P. Allen); *Western Values, II* (Sancho Panza); *The Mantle of McCarthy* (C. Meredith); *Nkrumah and Gold Coast* (I. Cox). BOOK REVIEWS: *Five Hundred Years of Printing* (S. H. Steinberg); *Bees* (I. Khalifman); reviewed by A. Tuckett, I. Montagu. COMMUNICATION: *'Constructive Imperialism'* (B. Davidson).

MARCH: *Crisis and Contrast* (R. Page Arnot); *How to Fight the Tory Offensive* (John Gollan); *Does Labour Deserve Gaitskell?* (James Klugmann); *What Now in France?* (Peter Fryer); *Homes for the People—or Means Test?* (T. Balmer); *The Great Pioneer* (Andrew Rothstein); *The Paris Commune: Marx Family Letters; They Remembered the Commune* (Angela Tuckett).

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N.A.T.O. - FACT AND FICTION

SANCHO PANZA

DISQUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT

The next few years were going to be more difficult for Nato than the past four.—General Gruenther, *The Times*, 11.6.55.

IF Nato countries didn't contain peoples but only governments and military installations all would be well on the Western Front. Though on second thoughts, even the governments, whose existence to a certain extent depends on the people, are known to have become somewhat obstreperous, and the military installations in spite of all the planning and thinking by the commanders, generals, admirals and what not, and in spite of colossal expenditure, tend to become constantly out of date. 1955 was not a happy year for Nato. For that matter neither were the six previous years. The only things that cheered up the leaders of Nato were the accession of Western Germany to Nato with its Nazi military leaders, and a prospect of yet another reorganisation on the basis of a unified airforce and the use of tactical atomic weapons. Towards the end of 1955 a military correspondent of *The Times* wrote:

> Militarily, 1955 has been an uncomfortable year for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation with Greeks and Turks at loggerheads, the bulk of the French Army pinned down in North Africa, and the growing realisation that massive retaliation is no longer a one-sided affair. Perhaps the most serious aspect is that the N.A.T.O. ground forces between the Baltic and the Alps are at their weakest now (13.12.55).

The unity of Nato is becoming more and more precarious. The stern command of Mr. Dulles that the 'unity of Nato should be restored without delay' has not been obeyed. Apart from Greece there have been warnings from Norway, Holland, Canada and France that the United States foreign policy and its attitude to colonial questions is endangering the unity of Nato. Then there is the mischievous Article 2 which constantly crops up at Nato deliberations and causes various difficulties and disagreements and is a source of serious embarrassment to the main partner.

1955 also brought proposals from the Soviet Union for peace and relaxation of international tension which were described by Mr. Macmillan, the then Foreign Secretary, as a possible 'sinister warning of a more subtle but just as deadly threat to the safety and unity of Nato'. Then came the summit meeting and the dangerous prospect

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of peace. 'Peace has captivated western Europe like an April breeze' wrote an American reporter. The *New York Times* complained that there had been a relaxation in Europe 'not only of tensions, but of vigilance'.

The prospect of peace caused a mass swooning among the generals, but they have rallied since then. The State Department, however, did not lose confidence. The officials, according to *The Times* Washington correspondent, spared no pains to tell people 'how heartened they feel by the continuing firmness of America's European allies' (29.8.55). It is also reported that the difficulties and differences leave the Shape and the Supreme Commander unperturbed because there are always the atom and hydrogen bombs and the United States strategic airforce which are outside Nato jurisdiction, or, as it is often put, which 'are held for the West by Britain and America'. There is Western Germany which is being made by the United States capable of policing Europe.

This month Nato is celebrating the seventh anniversary of the signing of the Treaty. And yet, although the initials appear constantly in the press, and in spite of a well-organised information service of Nato, it is complained that very few people, and least in America, know what Nato is and what is stands for.

WHAT IS NATO?

Questions are never indiscreet. Answers sometimes are.—*Oscar Wilde.*

Lord Ismay, the Secretary General of Nato, once said that the reason why people in all the Nato countries know little or nothing about Nato is that 'sets of initials are always lifeless and uninspiring' and that there are so very many international organisations, in fact 957. 'But', said Lord Ismay, 'Nato is not just another international organisation. It is something new, exciting and revolutionary'. But the substance behind the initials still continues to elude the 400 million inhabitants of Nato. The reason for this is simple. The leaders of Nato have not been able to make up their minds what Nato really is and what it stands for. Or, more truly said, they know what Nato is and what it stands for, but they do not know how not to convey it convincingly to the people.

What then is Nato apart from being 'a remarkably successful experiment' (Eden)? Some Nato leaders call it 'An Alliance'. But

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as an alliance smacks of war others call it 'More-than-an alliance' (*The Times*) or a 'Community' of 'like-minded' peoples. (*The Times* explained that Community suits 'the Anglo-Saxon tendency to state a general preference without bothering very much about what it means' (16.1.52). The more warlike Nato leaders like to call it 'The Great Deterrent'. As there is a confusion here with the H-bomb, 'Umbrella', 'Shield' or 'Screen' is often preferred by others. In general it is considered the 'basic element' of various foreign policies, a 'trump card' in the cold war and an instrument to put 'teeth into diplomacy'. Mr. Dulles recently called it 'a political warning system'. Lord Ismay, who ought to know best what Nato is, called it firmly 'a policeman who protects all the homes of Western Europe, of the United States and Canada, Turkey and Greece'. *The Times,* being often poetic, once called Nato 'The Phantom Army'. But there are also some leading people in Nato countries who have no respect for deterrents, umbrellas, policemen or military teeth, and who think that Nato forces are meant to police western Europe rather than keep out an intruder. They have called Nato irreverently 'a dumping ground for American and British obsolete arms', 'an instrument of American and British foreign policy', 'a debating society' and so forth. But as these people belong to the small nations of western Europe, they do not count.

Nato is composed of 15 countries lapped by the waves of the Atlantic, which in 1951 was diverted to wash the coasts of Turkey and Greece. The accession to Nato of Turkey and Greece made the Atlantic ocean look ridiculous, and it was decided to abandon the geographical area as a basis for Nato in favour of certain common principles. The definitions of some words used in connection with Nato 'have inevitably become broader. "Like-minded peoples" have been found to include recent enemies. "Principles of democracy" became synonymous with Anti-communism' (*The Times,* 25.7.51). According to the British official publication on Nato, called *Alliance for Peace,* 'the partners are all independent sovereign states, and there is no question of big or small countries, rich or poor countries'. 'But', corrects *The Times,* 'facts of power will always give greater influence to its chief members'. The chief members make the following contributions to Nato: United States —'vast wealth and industrial power'. Britain—'inventive genius' and France—'resilient spirit' (*Alliance for Peace*). The rôle of other partners is left to our imagination. The *Manchester Guardian* assures us that 'unlike the United States Britain is not treating them as inferiors'.

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If there should be any unclearness, doubt or misunderstanding left about what Nato is, let us try another angle. The favoured description of Nato as 'a community of free nations, acting together for the welfare and happiness of all', etc., etc., sounds to me like the favoured description of the British Commonwealth and Empire. As Nato is under the umbrella of the United States, we may legitimately assume that Nato is one of the attempts by the rulers of the United States to build a global empire. This attempt has been assisted by Britain in the hope of some fat crumbs from the rich man's table and in the hope of being able to maintain its own Empire. All the classical methods of empire building have been applied to Nato countries. Trade, money and missionaries were followed by military consolidation with American bases and bridgeheads. The various Nato countries have been allowed to maintain sovereignty in minor matters, and some loyal natives are trusted with secondary commands. An attempt has been made to call the natives of Nato 'Europeans', but they obstinately continue to call themselves French, Italians, or Dutch as the case may be. In sorrow General Eisenhower said:

> In that vital region, history, custom, language and prejudice have combined to hamper integration. . . . How tragic! (*The Times*, 4.7.51).

The soulless initials have not only worried Lord Ismay, but also other Nato leaders who would much prefer to call it 'The Atlantic Community'—'this vague but splendid title which Mr. Churchill has commended' (*The Times*, 16.1.52).

PEACEFUL INTENTIONS

> There is an uneasy feeling that Nato will lose the sustained public support unless it can shed its military label, or add a new one.—*Economist*, 24.12.55.

A French satirist once said: 'I can call nothing by name if that is not his name. I call a cat a cat, and Rolet a rogue'. Nato is a military organisation. It is an illegitimate offspring of the Anglo-American Cold War policy. Nato has never wanted peace. Nato is afraid of peace, because any threat to the Cold War is a threat to Nato. Before the summit meeting, in July, 1955, General Gruenther, for instance, declared:

> It would be catastrophic if under the pressure of public opinion, the political leaders went to the conference table convinced that a settlement had to be reached this year. . . . The military realities of the situation made no requirement for an immediate solution (*The Times*, 11.6.55).

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According to Lord Ismay the aim of Nato is 'to keep the peace, not with pious hopes and appeasing gestures but with a strong military force'. For seven years now Nato has been occupied with building its military force, and, as the leaders tell us, it has still a long way to go. The complaints that Nato is considered only in its military aspect seem to me unreasonable. They arise from the various ornaments and trimmings of the Treaty which some people seem to have taken seriously. What other achievements than military has Nato to its credit? All official reports list only military achievements. *Alliance for Peace* tells us that 'all the governments of the Atlantic Alliance look forward to the day when they can spend less money on armaments and more on those things which would bring greater well being and happiness to their peoples' and holds out the hope that

> when they reach the plateau of rearmament upon which real security is found they should be able to broaden out their efforts to embrace all the objectives incorporated in the Treaty.

We can only ask in the words once expressed by *The Times*: 'at what point will the United States consider that deterrent strength has been sufficiently established?' Judging from the deliberations of the last Atlantic Council meeting in December, the answer is never.

It makes one dizzy to recall all the varied and numerous attempts to give Nato some other plausible aim and purpose than military. 'There is room for action in the great field of moral and intellectual leadership' said President Eisenhower when he was the Supreme Commander in Nato. According to him Nato's aim is 'collective security as the product of three types of forces—spiritual, economic and military force'. The spiritual and economic forces have been duly put into the service of the military force. President Eisenhower, as most of the American statesmen, is very fond of using words like 'moral factors' and 'idealism'. Nato communiqués abound with a 'rather ambiguous agglomeration of sentiments and aspirations' (*The Times*), calculated to reach the 'hearts and minds' of men. But as *The Times* said:

> It is one thing for statesmen to profess high moral purposes, it is another to ensure that those purposes are kept permanently before their minds in face of all the distractions of politics (27.5.50).

The pleas for a 'fresh approach' and for 'putting life into Nato' have had no echo in the ears of the military leaders. After all Nato is a military organisation. But what about Article 2?

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ARTICLE 2

About once a year the Atlantic Council and those responsible for Nato affairs within its member governments look again at the woolly but well intentioned second article of the Treaty and wonder what to do about it.—*Economist*, 24.12.55.

The Canadian Prime Minister is supposed to have been largely responsible for Article 2 which reads as follows:

> The Parties will contribute toward the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening their free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded, and by promoting conditions of stability and well-being. They will seek to eliminate conflict in their international economic policies and will encourage economic collaboration between any or all of them.

The last sentence is the crucial one. Surely it was a spirit of mischief which brought Article 2 into being. It has caused more trouble among the partners than anything else. It has thrown doubt and disarray into the ranks of Nato. It has been a thorn in the eyes of the commanders, generals, admirals and the State Department. The trouble has arisen because the smaller Nato nations have taken Article 2 seriously and demand its implementation.

Article 2 is the 'something else' than the purely military aim of Nato. It means many things to many people. To some it spells 'enduring material progress as the reward for moral constancy', to others it is an 'obvious means of reconciling conflicting interests'. For military leaders it has had a doubtful propaganda value.

How has Article 2 fared up to now? Two years ago Lord Ismay told us in the *Radio Times* (2.4.54):

> Here we are now at the end of five years with a sound, well trained, closely integrated military force.... And now we are turning our attention to that other aspect of the Alliance which was written into the Treaty itself —Progress.

Alliance for Peace lists the achievements of Nato in relation to Article 2 as follows: (1) in the economic sphere Nato has 'a watching brief rather than an opportunity for doing a great deal', because it 'must leave many problems to be dealt with through bodies operating on a global basis'; (2) in the cultural and social sphere 'there is a somewhat similar situation; Nato's main task is to discover the gaps'; 'particular attention is being given to transatlantic relations'; the troops, one gathers, are the main cultural representatives; (3) continuous efforts are being made 'to increase public knowledge of the aims and activities of Nato'; a 'feeling of solidarity is growing', although, it is admitted, that 'nationalism is still a potent force'. On the military side 'a ready smile' has been achieved.

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As a blue-print for economic, social and cultural co-operation, Article 2 has not been very successful up to now. The promised economic collaboration has not materialised. There has been no shifting of emphasis from military preoccupation to that of economic considerations. The defence burden is as heavy as ever and will be more so when the new military plans are put into operation. But the Atlantic Council has not given up hope. At its last meeting in December, 1955, the following communiqué was issued:

> The council recognised that recent developments in the international situation made it more necessary than ever to have closer co-operation between the members of the Alliance, as envisaged in Article 2 of the Treaty. They decided to instruct the Permanent Council to examine and implement all measures conducive to this end.

THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL

> There are, literally, roses round the door of General Gruenther's headquarters near Paris; but behind the door. . . .—*Radio Times*, 2.4.54.

One would have thought that roses and planning for war do not go well together, but we have to assume that the roses express 'Atlantic Solidarity' and 'Idealism' and are part of the 'ready smile' policy. It is reported that there is a good understanding among the permanent representatives of the governments and the military commanders. 'There may be petty quarrels among us, these occur in the best regulated families', said Lord Ismay. At any rate the teams in the Palais de Chaillot have learned to speak the same language—the American language. But when it comes to the national governments and the ministerial meetings of the Atlantic Council the story is somewhat different.

The Atlantic Council is supposed to be the decisive leadership of Nato, that is, the political authority. But nobody loves the Council, least of all the military leaders. Soon after Nato was established and the military planning began, voices were raised to deprive the Atlantic Council of its political authority in favour of a committee of three, composed of United States, British and French representatives. Or to invest the political authority in the Supreme Commander. The strongest vocal advocate for this change has been our Field Marshal Lord Montgomery, who not only wants a small political authority but wants to place it out of harm's way in America. The Council, backed by Article 9 of the Treaty, has become a legal nuisance. People have begun to say that at best it is window-dressing.

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The effective leadership of Nato is in Washington. It is embodied in the Standing Group, composed of three members—representatives of the United States, British and French Chiefs of Staffs. The Standing Group is also called 'The Brain'. It does the thinking for Nato and directs the higher strategy. The Supreme Commander Allied Forces in Europe, General Gruenther, is the liaison officer whose task is to convey humbly to the Atlantic Council the thinking of 'The Brain'. Not that General Gruenther doesn't do a lot of thinking himself:

> In our thinking we visualise the use of atomic bombs in the support of our ground troops. We also visualise the use of atomic bombs on targets in enemy territory. I recognise that creates a major political problem and I want you to realise we at Shape do not think we are all political masters. But if war does take place our minds are clear that we must and shall use every weapon in our arsenal (*The Times*, 9.6.54).

That is, whatever the national governments may think. Lord Montgomery's job as second in command is to echo General Gruenther's and 'The Brain's' thinking for our benefit and to plead for the co-operation of the national governments. The military leaders love to do a lot of talking as well as thinking. Not only is the Standing Group under the wing of the Pentagon, but also the Supreme Commanders who are all Americans as the result of 'delicate negotiations'. General Eisenhower's argument that 'command positions should not be matters of national prestige' won the day.

As soon as the Atlantic Treaty was signed, Nato broke out, both in its military and civilian sides, into a mysterious rash of committees, working groups, plans, blue-prints, etc., and has continued to be so afflicted. So much so that it provoked the following comment from 30 American prominent men, including General Marshall:

> We and our allies have pyramided committee on top of committee in an effort to reconcile the irreconcilable (*The Times*, 23.11.51).

These gentlemen made the first serious suggestion for measures to deprive the Atlantic Council of its political authority because, as they said 'the Atlantic coalition disagrees on fundamental issues' which might endanger 'the safety of the American people'. Among the fundamental issues were listed the direction of foreign policy and the nature of trade relationships.

What then is the job of the Atlantic Council? *Alliance for Peace* tells us that 'its most important service is to provide a forum' for political discussion. 'Other functions' are—'to give political guidance to the military authorities and to support and sustain them in

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every way' and to see 'that the morale of the civil populations is maintained at a high level'. The Council in spite of efforts to streamline its organisation is still surrounded by a staggering amount of committees, expert committees, offices, divisions, boards, working groups and ad hoc working groups, which are still trying to 'reconcile the irreconcilable'. In addition there are the auxiliary instruments of Nato—the various 'European' organs.

There is a general view that as a political forum the Atlantic Council is a wash-out. A place 'for woolly and wandering speeches' (*Manchester Guardian*). Its main business seems to be to listen to the thinking of Nato commanders, to listen to their reports on Soviet military progress, to listen to their latest estimate of the year of danger, which now is 1960, to receive Nato military progress reports, and to admire the military charts, diagrams, blue-prints and plans and possibly bless them. Apart from that, the Atlantic Council serves for issuing communiqués where the aims, purpose and unity of Nato are restated and reaffirmed for the benefit of the public at large. These communiqués have often, to put it in the words of *The Times* 'a very American ring'.

How does the Council work? Nato 'democracy' seems to be a queer business. If we could listen at the keyhole of the Atlantic Council instead of reading its official communiqués, we might learn something. In the official communiqués 'the Atlantic Council has apparently hit on the device of a kind of mock publicity which pretends to tell everything while revealing nothing' (*The Times*, 26.2.52). The Council is supposed to be the embodiment of Nato 'democracy' and unity. It must work as a team. In the name of unity all controversial subjects are avoided and only 'agreed views' are made public. Nevertheless, *Alliance for Peace* tells us that 'anyone is at liberty to oppose a decision', but 'there is no imposing of the majority will upon the minority'. The minority, as I understand it, often consists of Britain and the United States. The *Economist*, having an old fashioned view of democracy, pleaded after the last Council meeting for 'an occasional glimpse of the democratic process at work' and for 'the right to differ'. But what would Nato unity look like if questions were raised 'that internally divide the Nato members' or problems discussed 'how to organise deterrence and policing more economically' as the *Observer* suggested? These problems the *Economist* tells us 'are consistently relegated to the corridors in an effort to leave the Atlantic Council itself unruffled' (24.12.55).

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The Atlantic Council is not meant to be taken seriously as the leading political body, except by innocent, gullible and old-fashioned liberals. The policy for Nato is supplied by the United States and Britain. If the Council seems to flounder it is because the leading Power, the United States, has no policy to offer or, because British and American interests and their foreign policies do not always coincide. Yet the Council can do and has done a lot of harm to the European nations by lending itself as a cover for Anglo-American policies. By sanctioning General Gruenther's proposal to use tactical nuclear weapons it has committed the European nations in Nato, without realising the full implication of this proposal, to the Anglo-American strategy of nuclear bombing. Or as the *Daily Telegraph* puts it:

> Nato is concentrating the power to take life and death decision more and more in the hands of the major Powers, in particular of the United States (27.2.56).

WHAT NEXT

A sweet thick propaganda sauce has been ladled profusely on the Nato pudding. But the European peoples are learning to separate the sauce from the pudding. There is a growing anxiety among British and American statesmen that European members of Nato might refuse to accept Anglo-American leadership since it has become clear that their strategy is entirely based on the use of nuclear weapons. It seems that not only Article 2 and Article 9 have become a nuisance to Nato leaders, but that the whole Treaty clamours for revision. The *Daily Telegraph* writes:

> what is needed is a re-definition of the obligations and risks implicit in the Nato alliance, in the light of the nuclear age (27.2.56).

Neither Britain nor America has much belief in Nato. Nor do they think much of their partners. Nor is there much love lost between themselves. Yet Britain and America are profoundly 'dedicated' to Nato. And Britain never ceases to declare its undying but one-sided love to America—'our life and faith' (Eden). What is one to think of it? Could it be that Britain and America have never had 'peaceful intentions', that they do not intend to abandon the Cold War and the idea of a global war, when the territories, though not the people of Nato countries, become all important? What is one to make of Lord Montgomery's warning:

> Don't let us be led astray by 'Operation Smiles'. Don't let the spirit of Geneva cause us to lose our perspective (*Daily Telegraph*, 22.10.55).

or Mr. Dulles' statement that

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> Even if the east-west tensions were totally resolved, the United States would insist on the maintenance of these two organisations (*The Times*, 3.8.55).

Meaning Nato and Seato. There may be a 'moral' issue involved somewhere, who knows? But the United States has another very good reason to be dedicated to Nato. Where else could it successfully hide its military alliance with Western Germany?

What about Britain? Nato was originally a British child—Mr. Bevin's child, born of his hatred of communism, of the Soviet Union, and of the realisation of Britain's weakened position in the world. It is difficult to abandon a child even when it has grown to be a menace. Mr. Bevin's hopes that Britain's problems would be solved by the Cold War and in the wider alliance of Nato have not materialised. The Soviet Union has grown in strength. Britain has lost a good many of its anchors in the world. The contradictions and conflicting interests with America and Europe remain. Britain did not achieve the coveted leadership of Europe and has lost a good deal of its own national sovereignty. The dreams and visions of Churchill, inherited by Eden, of changing Nato into a snug Atlantic Community under the protection of America remain dreams and visions. The policy of its successive governments has brought Britain into a very 'melancholy and anxious position', to use Sir Winston Churchill's words. Why stick to Nato?

Book Reviews

PETER OF RUSSIA

Peter The First, by Alexey Tolstoy. (796 pp. Lawrence & Wishart. *12s. 6d.*)

PETER I holds a very special place in Russian history. In his reign Russia first established herself as a European power; Russian ships appeared on the Baltic and the Black Sea; and Russian trade and industry took a big leap forward. Under Peter Russia consciously went to school to western Europe. Peter himself toured the west and learned the latest techniques of ship-building. In pre-revolutionary Russia Peter was therefore a controversial figure. The bourgeois 'westernisers' praised him exaggeratedly, the conservative Slavophils hated him for disrupting the old order of 'Holy Russia'. It was left for Soviet historical research to show that Peter, though undoubtedly a great ruler, does not deserve either the praise or the blame that have been heaped on him. Russia was ready for westernisation anyway: it would have come, Peter or no Peter, though perhaps not quite so fast or so brutally.

Alexey Tolstoy's *Peter the First* is very faithful to the historical evidence in showing the old Russian society ripe for the reforms of the great Tsar. All classes felt there must be a change. The Moscow populace and the peasants rose in blind revolt against the senseless

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oppression of the incompetent landlord ruling class; merchants longed to drive out the foreigners and establish their own industries. The chief minister, the ineffective dreamer Prince Golitsin, drafted blueprints which he had no real hopes of carrying out. Meanwhile the young Tsar played soldiers with an 'army' of his own friends—the nucleus of the force which later beat the Turks and the Swedes.

This novel is not for the squeamish. It is about a brutal age, and it is true to life here too. Cruel torture, savage fighting, the readiness of all classes to resort to violence—all this is faithfully shown. The character of Peter is by no means idealised; but we are able to see him developing, learning that the merchants are more useful to the state than the old aristocracy but that he must not trust them either; learning through defeats —like the one at Narva when Russian generals surrendered through fear of their own rank and file—how to mould victorious troops out of raw peasants.

This edition contains a revised version of the first two parts, published in an English translation in 1936, together with the third part which was left unfinished when Tolstoy died in 1945. Lawrence and Wishart are to be congratulated on producing an 800-page book so handsomely for what is today the reasonable price of 12s. 6d. The translation reads easily, but would have benefited by editorial revision. Some of the Russian names are oddly printed. The King of Poland whom English books call Augustus becomes 'August', as though he was a month. The titles of German princes are sometimes translated, sometimes left in the original. It is sad to find 'trousers' rendered as 'pants'; one does not expect Lawrence and Wishart thus to bow to American culture. A dreadful literal translation from the Russian appears far too often—'a cup with coffee', meaning 'a cup of coffee'; 'a roll with poppy seed' for 'a poppy-seed roll'. A little more editorial attention could have removed these blemishes on a powerful book.

CHRISTOPHER HILL

MOZART (1756-1791)

Mozart's Letters. Edited and introduced by Eric Blom. (278 pp. Penguin Books. *3s 6d*)

Opera in Czechoslovakia, by Ladislav Sip. (76 pp. Orbis Press, Prague.)

JUST as Mozart's music reflects the throbbing social tensions of his period, so his letters reveal his struggles, humiliations, and triumphs. We see him keen and observant, and not afraid to adopt a critical attitude towards the 'higher ups' in society. Mozart bitterly resented the patronising snobbery of some of them towards himself and his music. He was angry when Archbishop Colleredo, of Salzburg, treated him as a scullion, and when he was kicked out of the room by Count Karl Arco. Mozart portrayed many social snobs in his later operas. It is also easy to understand why many of the servants who appear in the *Seraglio, Marriage of Figaro, Cosi fan tutte,* and the *Magic Flute* are bright and resourceful personalities. As professor Dent declares: 'in the *Marriage of Figaro,* as in *Don Giovanni* and *Cosi fan tutte* as well, the privileged classes are systematically held up to ridicule'.

Although Mozart composed over six hundred works of music—symphonies, concertos, chamber suites, etc., and many of those were the greatest of their kind—his great musical passion was to write opera. As a boy he had composed two operas, *Bastien and Bastienne* and *La*

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Finta Semplice. Time after time he started on an opera and left it unfinished. More and more he was experimenting and becoming an expert craftsman and was developing a miraculous sense of dramatic reality. This can be seen when comparing such a beautiful opera as *Idomeneo,* or *Seraglio,* a wonderful German *Singspiel* with a Turkish flavour, with his later operas.

In 1786 *The Marriage of Figaro* based on Beaumarchais's revolutionary play was produced. Here, at last, Mozart had an opportunity to lift opera to a new high level by showing live people—whose passions and motives were dramatised realistically and each person defined with unerring musical characterisation. Apart from the opera attacking ancient feudal privilege Mozart created a revolution in presentation. Opera was no longer a slow moving affair. In the opening bars of the *Marriage of Figaro* the dramatic problem is stated and the social tensions proclaimed. Figaro, the count's servant who is about to be married, sings about his lordship:

If you are after a little amusement
You may go dancing, but I'll play the tune.

The same dramatic springboard effect takes place at the very beginning of *Don Giovanni* where an attempted seduction and a brutal murder take place in a few moments. And in *Cosi fan tutte* the brief opening scene states the dramatic essence of the opera.

The *Marriage of Figaro* was coolly received in Vienna, but in Prague, the Czech capital of Bohemia, its wonderful and witty music was received with enthusiasm and rapture. Ladislav Sip in his little book *Opera in Czechoslovakia* reminds us that when our own Doctor Charles Burney visited the Czech province in 1772 he declared that 'Bohemia was the conservatory of Europe', and said of education in Bohemia that

> even in small villages where there is a reading school children are taught music. . . . I went into a school which was full of little children from six to ten years of age who were reading, writing, playing on violins, oboes, bassoons, and other instruments.

Bohemia and Prague produced some of the most remarkable musicians in Europe. Mozart met and knew many of them including Misliveczek. When Mozart visited Prague to be present at the performances of the *Marriage of Figaro* he brought with him a new musical offering—the Prague symphony. With this work Mozart reached new heights in symphonic development. So popular was Mozart in Prague, and so numerous were his admirers there that they insisted on him composing a new opera for them. This was to be *Don Giovanni,* part of which he composed in the beautiful Bertsamka villa in Prague. Small wonder Mozart was happy in Bohemia for there he said, 'my dear friends in Prague understand'. But overworked, over-anxious about his poverty, and stricken with fever, he died in Vienna on the 5th December, 1791 at the early age of 35 years. For reasons of economy he was buried in a pauper's grave which is unknown to this very day.

WILLIAM PAUL

ROOSEVELT'S HOME SECRETARY

The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes, Vols. I, II and III. (750, 766, 696 pp. Weidenfeld & Nicolson. *31s 6d* each).

HAROLD ICKES, who was Secretary of the Interior under President F. D. Roosevelt, systematically dictated long diary entries, and the

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three volumes of this book, published at intervals in 1954-5, contain selections from the diary over the period 1933 to 1941 (Pearl Harbour). The book ought to be interesting, for Ickes was an intelligent, active and vigorous person, and was close to the centre of the scene in years of important events; but it is a great disappointment. It consists mainly of a series of rather dreary *exposés* of the muddles, corruptions, inter-departmental quarrels, and egotistical pushings for jobs and promotions, that made up American political life at that level and at that time. (There is little reason to suppose it is any better today; but some of them may have learnt not to keep, or not to publish diaries!) The earnest searcher would find in the book a few interesting passages, as one may find small diamonds in a not very rich field. Ickes sees, and records, for example, that in 1939 'England has grovelled on its belly before Hitler because it is afraid of Communism', and that Mussolini, Hitler and the Japanese all exploited the Communist bogey to achieve their own fascist successes: from this, he draws the inference that Dies (who, it will be remembered, was, with his Committee, the forerunner of McCarthy) will, if he is not checked, carry the U.S.A. into Fascism. And a year later, in May 1940, he considers that if the Roosevelt government cannot successfully fight 'big business', Fascism will result. Somewhat later, he asks himself the Churchillian question as to which choice he would make if he *had* to live under either Fascism or Communism and elects for Communism. (What would that have cost him, if he were alive today?) He sees, too, that the Communist bogey is used as a weapon against strikes and the labour movement in general.

But the reader of this review must not be tempted by this little show of diamonds to think that the book as a whole is worth reading, or that Ickes really saw very far, or was more than superficially progressive.

D. N. PRITT

ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN

I Speak my own Piece, the autobiography of a 'Rebel Girl' by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. (326 pp. Masses and Mainstream, New York. *$1·75*.)

THE first quarter of this century in the United States was the period of mighty efforts to organise into Unions unskilled and semi-skilled workers especially the foreign born immigrants. Great strikes, notably among the steel smelters, miners and textile workers, were met with violence: every strike brought its toll of dead, beaten, framed-up and imprisoned. Into this maelstrom stepped a sixteen year old girl, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, whose life was part and parcel of these struggles. This first volume gives a vivid account of her life up to 1927. Of Irish descent (her family was related to that of Bernard Shaw), she always identified herself with the fight for Irish freedom and knew intimately James Connolly and Jim Larkin. As an organiser of the I.W.W. this slip of a girl led strikes among the Western Miners, among iron workers on the Mesaba Range, textile workers in Lawrence and Patterson. She fought for free speech travelling the length and breadth of the country, organising and raising solidarity support for workers everywhere. She worked with Big Bill Haywood, William Z Foster, Eugene Debs. As organiser of the Workers' Defence Union she campaigned on behalf of the prisoners of the class struggle such as Tom Mooney, Sacco and Vanzetti. Today, she is in an American jail, imprisoned for her

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ideas. She spent her 65th birthday in a prison cell. Her book contains a facsimile of a moving letter from Joe Hill, written in jail a few hours before he was shot, bidding farewell to her who had inspired his song 'The Rebel Girl'.

This book portrays the bitterness and violence, the brutality of the American ruling class, especially against the immigrants: and also the vitality and courage of the workers who stood up and fought. Mistakes were made, bitter lessons were learned. The need for a clear political leadership uniting the working class became clear: this led Gurley Flynn into the ranks of the Communist Party. Pulsating through it all shines the character of a gifted, warm-hearted girl, growing into a noble woman, representing all that is best in the American working class.

ISABEL BROWN

Shorter Notice

Labour's Way Forward, by T. Braddock and J. Lawrence. (12 pp. Labour Today Publications. *3d.*)

Socialist policy for the Labour Party: resistance to all Tory attacks on wages, housing, social services: 'Socialist criticism *inside* Parliament' and 'Socialist action outside Parliament' is the call by these two prominent Labour Party members. 'The entire labour movement—labour parties, co-operative parties, trades councils, communist party, trade union branches and tenants associations' can be built into a 'solid wall of resistance to the Government's attack on living standards'; but 'Unity must be the watchword'. It is a vigorous, challenging pamphlet.

B.M.B.

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arrested. At Harrow Road on Saturday night, August 28, 1886, when the police hustled off the main speaker on the usual charge of 'obstruction', he jumped up. 'As the audience seemed, like Oliver Twist, anxious for more, Henderson resumed the meeting amid loud cheers.' Week after week they held the pitch, despite arrests, Henderson himself being summonsed. A few months later Henderson moved to Norfolk, where he was sentenced to four months' imprisonment when an unemployed demonstration at which he spoke was followed by disturbances. This he served in the jail at Norwich —of which city he later was to become Lord Mayor, and where today he is Alderman and J.P. Now turn to page 158 and read his current advice to labour—*and see that every Labour Party member you know reads it too.*

Another link with the stirring past is recalled by Harry Pollitt's moving tribute (page 167) to Tom Mann, on the centenary of his birth. This same year of 1886 saw Tom Mann, of the Social Democratic Federation, in the thick of it. For the S.D.F. decided to liven up the pageantry of the Lord Mayor's Show that November with a show of its own of the unemployed of London, which 'set the whole of bourgeoisdom in a twitter', in the words of William Morris. This was forbidden. Proclamations forbade this, and flags and banners and speeches. Police were massed in Trafalgar Square to intimidate. The Lord Mayor's Show passed. 'Suddenly a small red flag was waved. . . . Then another flag appeared. A loud "hurrah!" was raised . . . then a rush of people, and quick as thought from all sides the people rushed into the Square and now there were red pocket-handkerchiefs being waved, and on every side the red flag held the crowd. After a time Comrade Mann of the S.D.F. obtained a hearing. His voice rang clear out over the vast crowd, telling the people that their poverty was caused by the robber band they had just seen drive past, and others like them in every city and on every countryside in our land; and advising them to unite to break up the robber league, and to organise to make every man and woman in England really free.'

From the stirring past to the stirring present with *The Vision Splendid* of which R.P.D. writes in this number, dealing with the historic Twentieth Congress at which 'never was the immortal youth of Marxism-Leninism more powerfully demonstrated'. Here, we think, is a number which surpasses even last month's, which, to single out one word of praise from many, was 'up to our normal *best*'. See that it is used up to the hilt to win new readers. On this question, and on the grand response to our explanation of increasing financial difficulties, full details next time. A.T.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

BOOKS

Coal is our Life, by N. Dennis, F. Henriques, C. Slaughter. Eyre & Spottiswoode. 256 pp. 25s.
The Rebecca Riots, by D. Williams. University of Wales Press. 378 pp. 25s.
Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. 4. Lawrence & Wishart. 348 pp. 6s.
He Must So Live, by D. Lambert. Lawrence & Wishart. 210 pp. 12s 6d.
Scientific History of the Hindi Language by S. S. Narula. Hindi Academy, New Delhi. 136 pp. 12s 6d.
Trade Unionism in Aberdeen, by K. D. Buckley. Oliver & Boyd. 202 pp. 13s 6d.
Those Stormy Years, by G. Hardy. Lawrence & Wishart. 256 pp. 15s.
New From Africa, by J. Hatch. Dobson. 124 pp. 10s 6d.
The Second International, by G. D. H. Cole. Macmillan. 2 Vols., 1,044 pp. £3 10s.
Cavalier of the Gold Star, by S. P. Babayevsky. 628 pp. 12s. 6d.

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